Telecommunications Services Priority (TSP) Program

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Background

On November 17, 1988, the FCC established the Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) Program to help reduce the chaos after a disaster, when communications companies may be overwhelmed with requests for repairs or new services. The TSP Program is a voluntary program to ensure that networks, services, and phone lines are restored on a priority basis in the event of a national crisis or attack. The TSP Program also provides a means for the telecommunications industry to make decisions about what lines should be restored first according to services enrolled in the program. The FCC is currently partnering with the Department of Homeland Security's National Communications System (NCS) and three associations in a nationwide campaign to increase TSP participation by 9-1-1 call centers.

National Security or Emergency Preparedness (NS/EP)

The TSP Program ensures that the telecommunications lines most necessary to promote the nation's security and emergency preparedness functions are given priority service by telecommunications carriers and, therefore, are installed and restored to service before all others in times of disaster.

As a result of hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and other natural and man-made disasters, communications repair people may become overwhelmed with requests to restore and replace existing telecommunications lines and services. The TSP Program provides an FCC mandate for prioritizing service requests by identifying those services critical to national security or emergency preparedness (NS/EP). A telecommunications service with a TSP assignment would receive attention by the communications repair personnel before a non-TSP service.

Telecommunications lines serving federal, state, and local government agencies (like 911 call centers), as well as private firms, can be covered by the program, provided that they are essential for national security or emergency

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FCC

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preparedness functions. For example, Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) administrators who operate the nation's 911 centers qualify for inclusion in the TSP Program because their services are essential to the health and safety of American citizens.

TSP Components

The TSP Program has two components:

- _Restoration_ – A restoration priority is applied to new or existing telecommunications services to ensure their restoration before any non-TSP services. Priority restoration is necessary for a TSP service because interruptions may have a serious adverse effect on the supported NS/EP function. Restoration priorities must be requested and assigned **before** a service outage occurs.

- _Provisioning_ – A provisioning priority is obtained to facilitate priority installation of new telecommunications service. Provisioning on a priority basis becomes necessary when a service user has an urgent need for a new NS/EP service that must be installed immediately (i.e., in an emergency) or in a shorter than normal interval.

Contacts

To apply for participation in the TSP Program or for additional information regarding the operation of the TSP Program, call the Critical Infrastructure Protection Division of National Communications System (NCS), 703-607-4903, or the Defense and Security Office of the FCC, 202-418-0802. In addition, detailed materials regarding the TSP Program are available on the NCS Website, **http://tsp.ncs.gov/**. Information on how to obtain FCC sponsorship and how to enroll in TSP may be found at **http://www.fcc.gov/hspc/emergencytelecom.html**.